

Japan

Geography

Location: Eastern Asia, island chain between the North Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan, east of the Korean peninsula

Area:

total area: 377,835 sq km

land area: 374,744 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 29,751 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive fishing zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm; 3 nm in the international straits - La Perouse or Soya, Tsugaru, Osumi, and Eastern and Western Channels of the Korea or Tsushima Strait

Climate: varies from tropical in south to cool temperate in north

Terrain: mostly rugged and mountainous

Natural resources: negligible mineral resources, fish

Land use:

arable land: 13%

permanent crops: 1%

meadows and pastures: 1%

forest and woodland: 67%

other: 18%

Irrigated land: 28,680 sq km (1989)

Environment:

current issues: air pollution from power plant emissions results in acid rain; acidification of lakes and reservoirs degrading water quality and threatening aquatic life; Japan's appetite for fish and tropical timber is contributing to the depletion of these resources in Asia and elsewhere

natural hazards: many dormant and some active volcanoes; about 1,500 seismic occurrences (mostly tremors) every year; tsunamis

Note: strategic location in northeast Asia

People

Population: 125,506,492 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 16% (female 9,955,603; male 10,542,973)

15-64 years: 69% (female 43,377,425; male 43,843,645)

65 years and over: 15% (female 10,514,017; male 7,272,829) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.32% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 10.66 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 7.46 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 4.3 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 79.44 years
male: 76.6 years
female: 82.42 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 1.56 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: Japanese (singular and plural)
adjective: Japanese

Ethnic divisions: Japanese 99.4%, other 0.6% (mostly Korean)

Religions: observe both Shinto and Buddhist 84%, other 16%
(including 0.7% Christian)

Languages: Japanese

Literacy:
total population: 99%

Labor force: 65.87 million (December 1994)

by occupation: trade and services 54%, manufacturing, mining, and construction 33%, agriculture, forestry, and fishing 7%, government 3% (1988)

Government

Names:

conventional short form: Japan

Capital: Tokyo

Independence: 660 BC (traditional founding by Emperor Jimmu)

National holiday: Birthday of the Emperor, 23 December (1933)

Constitution: 3 May 1947

Suffrage: 20 years of age; universal

Flag: white with a large red disk (representing the sun without rays) in the center

Economy

Overview: Government-industry cooperation, a strong work ethic, mastery of high technology, and a comparatively small defense allocation (roughly 1% of GDP) have helped Japan advance with extraordinary rapidity to the rank of second most powerful economy in the world. Industry, the most important sector of the economy, is heavily dependent on imported raw materials and fuels. Usually self-sufficient in rice, Japan must import about 50% of its requirements of other grain and fodder crops. Japan maintains one of the world's largest fishing fleets and accounts for nearly 15% of the global catch. The crowding of the habitable land area and the aging of the population are two major long-run problems.

Industries: steel and non-ferrous metallurgy, heavy electrical equipment, construction and mining equipment, motor vehicles and parts, electronic and telecommunication equipment and components, machine tools and automated production systems, locomotives and railroad rolling stock, shipbuilding, chemicals, textiles, food processing

Agriculture: accounts for only 2% of GDP; highly subsidized and protected sector, with crop yields among highest in world; principal crops - rice, sugar beets, vegetables, fruit; animal products include pork, poultry, dairy and eggs; about 50% self-sufficient in food production; shortages of wheat, corn, soybeans; world's largest fish catch of 10 million metric tons in 1991

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 27,327 km

Highways:

total: 1,111,974 km

Inland waterways: about 1,770 km; seagoing craft ply all coastal inland seas

Pipelines: crude oil 84 km; petroleum products 322 km; natural gas 1,800 km

Ports: Akita, Amagasaki, Chiba, Hachinohe, Hakodate, Higashi-Harima, Himeji, Hiroshima, Kawasaki, Kinuura, Kobe, Kushiro, Mizushima, Moji, Nagoya, Osaka, Sakai, Sakaide, Shimizu, Tokyo, Tomakomai

Airports:
total: 175

Defence Forces

Branches: Japan Ground Self-Defence Force (Army), Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (Navy), Japan Air Self-Defence Force (Air Force)